[EIDAH]

796 spears in salute to him. The crowd then dispersed and people
[574] dressed in fine robes visited one another and exchanged greetings. Later that evening horsemen rode once again in salute on the dandal; this time the kabuna were joined by a number of townspeople.

796 On the second day of Ngumari Ashembe an enormous feast, at-
574 tended by about three hundred people, was held at the Ajari at eight in the morning. Some two hundred and fifty people were
[563] seated in the outermost courtyard of the Ajari. These included the kabuna, the more important of the Koranic Malams of the town, and a number of the important traders, many of the latter Hausa. In an inner chamber were the thirty-one members of the NA staff. At one end of the inner chamber, on a raised section sat the Ajia along with the Alkali, the Chief Scribe, the Treasurer, a representative of the Shehu, and Malam Jalo. After a time, the group in the inner chamber made up of the NA staff moved to an inner courtyard, split up into six smaller groups,
[262] and food was brought out. In the inner courtyard pancakes (senasen) were served, followed by rice bari (porridge), whole roast chickens, and large sections of ram roasted in a hole in
[272] the earth. Orange squash was drunk with the meal itself. After
[302] the meal, kola nuts were distributed, and after all had washed,
[576] perfume was passed around. Lastly, prayers were said, and all rose, said "Allah ngubɔro" (literally meaning, "May Allah prolong your days"--the traditional phrase of deference said to
[431] men of higher status) to Yerima, and left. Throughout this time,

796 bowls of food were sent out to the large group of men gathered
574 in the outermost courtyard, and eighty additional bowls, each
431 sufficient to feed four or five people, were distributed to families in the town. In all, 108 bowls of bari, each costing about 2 shillings, were given away by the Ajia. Mass distribution of food in this manner is done three times each year, at Ngumari Ashembe, at Ngumari Layabe, and at Mamaludu Kuguibe. In a small town which has no Ajia, the Lowan distributes food to all the families of the town. In Geidam only the Ajia distributes food in this manner, although the Alkali also gives away a great deal on a smaller scale. In Maiduguri the Shehu and the Waziri both distribute great quantities of food, while the Ajia of Maiduguri does not.

796 That evening about thirty-five people were invited to a
574 second feast at the house of Alkali Baba Kura. The meal itself
[272] was essentially the same as that at the Ajia's, except that Krola (a Nigerian imitation of Coca-Cola) was served instead of Orange squash and clear mints were passed around with the kola
796 nuts. Though the feast itself was traditional in every respect,
574 the manner of invitation was not. A list, headed by the writer
554 (referred to locally as Malam Ibrahim), was sent to all who were invited to attend. The group was made up largely of the NA Malams, the two Kanuri Lowans and the two most important ka-
[264] buna, one Kanuri and two Hausa traders, and a few others. Not present were Yerima Mustapha, who is too important a man to eat at another's house, any of the Limans or important Koranic Malams, the Hausa Lowan or the deposed Lowan Kagu, any craft heads,

796 and most of the important traders. Eating from one bowl at
574 the head group were, in addition to the Alkali, the Chief Scribe,
554 the Treasurer, Malam Jalo, Sidi Mohammad, and the writer.

796 Celebration of the festival marking the end of Ramadan,
182 Ngumari Ashembe, has been described in some detail above. In
554 the description can be seen the integration of a religious festival with the social structure of the town of Geidam. Keeping of the fast is observed by the entire community and serves to bind its members through a ritual of suffering. The communal bond is further strengthened by public prayer marking the end of the fast. The roles of various office-holders can be seen in connection with these observances. The Liman leads the public prayers; the Alkali attests to the sighting of the new moon; and the Ajia more than any other person uses the festival celebrations to demonstrate and to validate his high status and his great power. The day of Ngumɔri Ashembe is marked by horse displays in which the kabuna of the Ajia vow their allegiance to him, before large crowds of admiring townspeople. On the following day all the important men of the town are invited to a great feast at the Ajari, and vast quantities of food are distributed by the Ajia who demonstrates the generosity expected of a great Kanuri aristocrat and receives the deferential courtesies owed to a great man. The feast which the Alkali makes is minor in comparison and is limited solely to the town aristocracy and the NA Malams.

796 Another extremely important yearly festival is called
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173 554 562 571 [644] guilds.(1) The Ma'aram or Shehu's sister, and the Maira, the King's mother were the head women of the state. There was also a Do'oma or head of zower (unmarried divorced women) for the entire state, as well as the Gumsu, the senior wife of the Shehu. Each town had its own local head of women and head of the unmarried divorced women under the [574] titled heads in the capital. When visitors or an army regiment arrived the total community of women could easily be organized under their leaders to prepare food and proper lodging for the strangers. The titled women in the capital were invested to their offices in male robes.

178 554 562 [644] The title Do'oma (head of zower) is said to have fallen into disuse after the fall of the first dynasty at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but was revived in 1925 by Shehu Sanda. It exists today but has no reference to zower. Informants around the palace claimed that except for the title of Maira (Queen Mother, but now held by any senior patri-female relative of the Shehu), the Gumsu (the Shehu's senior wife) chooses the women to receive the titles of Ma'aram and Do'oma. 554 562 527 Although it was not observed, informants claimed that at big celebrations of state, the titled women must wear their men's robes of office, men's hats, and walk with their special men's sticks. This ceremonial transvestism emphasizes the congruency of nobility, authority, and prestige with maleness.

554 562 [431] In contemporary Bornu, the word ma'aram has come to mean the local head of the unmarried women, who are not linked very closely into any overall state organization. It is customary for the women when they marry to give her a small payment, fataka (Kanuri for two shillings) which the men give to the Lawan (Village Area Head) before the marriage.

[476] The women are organized as a semi-formal work force under the ma'aram for quite traditional purposes.

(1) See below pp. 269-270.

000 for quite traditional purposes. If visitors come to town, the head of
554 the settlement or the District Head informs the ma'aram as to how many
562 are coming and for how long. She then organizes the cooking of the food
476 and the water carrying for the strangers. Some informants claimed that
574 the ma'aram could commandeer cooking utensils (not food) in the market without payment while preparing for visitors.

554 The status of the ma'aram is formally expressed (as are all
576 superior-suborindate relations in Bornu) by those who say alangubero to her and those who do not. The junior must always say alangubero to the senior as a sign of respectful greeting. All women who consider themselves tala (wives of peasant-commoners) greet her with alangubero while all wives of Mai (chiefs), i.e. women of the Shehu, the District Heads of the Lawan, or the wives of the Alkalai (the Muslim judge) expect that the ma'aram will greet them by saying alangubero. In Maguneri this rule was followed, but also extended. The wife of the District Head's chief follower (the Wakil) came from a high status Maiduguri family and was personally very wealthy. She was accordingly given respect
554 by the ma'aram. It is the ma'aram in each town who always leads the
562 organization of the women during festivities, during rites de passage, or at large celebrations such as religious holidays.

Success and Stratification

55 After rational empirical causes are considered the success
828 or failure of any individual in Kanuri society can be attributed to his good fortune. This quality is an essential and variable aspect of human nature, essential for success, and variable from person to person and within the same person through time. If an individual moves up the political scale, amasses wealth, harvests a good crop, is lucky in gambling, wins judicial decisions, obtains power and authority over others, or